



Government of Western Australia  
North Metropolitan Health Service

# Climate and Sustainability Strategy

2025-2027



## Acknowledgement of Country

The North Metropolitan Health Service (NMHS) acknowledges the Whadjuk people of the Noongar nation as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land on which we work and pays respect to their Elders past and present. NMHS acknowledges that the majority of its business is conducted on Whadjuk Noongar Boodjar and a number of services are conducted statewide. NMHS recognises, respects and values Aboriginal cultures as we walk a new path together.

## Human rights statement

We will respect, consider and advocate for human rights in our decision-making and actions.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are advised that this document may contain images of deceased people.

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## > Foreword

On behalf of North Metropolitan Health Service (NMHS), I am proud to introduce our inaugural Climate and Sustainability Strategy. This strategy outlines our unwavering commitment to making healthcare more sustainable and addressing the impacts of climate change on physical and mental health, service delivery and healthcare infrastructure.

These impacts are undeniable, with rising temperatures, extreme weather, and deteriorating air quality already affecting the well-being of our population. As a health service, we have a critical role to play in mitigating these impacts and reducing the environmental impact of our operations.

Over the past few years, we have made good progress in introducing and embracing sustainable practices. We were the first public health service in WA to establish an electric vehicle fleet and have led the way in reducing the WA health system's carbon footprint from inhaled anaesthetics, particularly desflurane. Most recently, Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital became the first tertiary site in WA to decommission nitrous

oxide piping to minimise waste of this potent greenhouse gas.

However, we recognise there is still much to do. This strategy identifies the priority actions we will focus on over the next three years to reduce our carbon footprint, operate more sustainably, and support adaptation to the impacts of climate change.

Achieving these goals will require a collective effort, and we are fortunate to have a passionate, dedicated and engaged workforce who are leading the way. This includes more than 100 sustainability leaders who initiate and champion climate and sustainability initiatives across our sites and services.

We are committed to collaborating closely with our staff, partners, suppliers and the wider community to build a resilient and sustainable health service for current and future generations. This strategy represents a vital next step in the way we will work together to support a healthy sustainable environment and set a benchmark for others to follow.



**Rob Toms**  
Chief Executive  
North Metropolitan Health Service



## > Why we need a Climate and Sustainability Strategy

*"Climate change is the greatest challenge of the 21st century, threatening human health and development. The longer we delay action, the greater the risks to human lives and health."*

World Health Organization

With climate change already affecting health and wellbeing in our community it will continue to place pressure on healthcare demand and capacity.

While the health system has a crucial role to play in addressing the impacts of climate change, and ensuring we can continue to deliver essential health services during climate-related disruptions, it also generates emissions in the process. Every healthcare activity carries an environmental and carbon cost, from the energy and water consumed in our hospitals and buildings, to the vehicles used for transporting patients, staff and visitors, and the products purchased to deliver patient care. In WA, the health system is estimated to contribute eight per cent of the state's emissions.

NMHS is committed to reducing its environmental impact and supporting the government's transition to net zero emissions by 2050.

This inaugural climate and sustainability strategy outlines immediate priorities and actions to reduce emissions, operate more sustainably and prepare for the impacts of climate change.

These priorities align with other key strategic objectives for NMHS, including improving preventative and community health, investing in digital and virtual care solutions, reducing variations in care, and delivering high-value, person-centred care.

The strategy's direction and ambition have been informed by evidence and robust stakeholder consultation with staff across NMHS sites and services, as well as key partners.

## > NMHS Strategic Plan

The Climate and Sustainability Strategy will support the organisation to achieve one of the six strategic objectives of the NMHS Strategic Plan:

**Building a sustainable future** – optimise allocation of our resources and minimise environmental impact to secure a sustainable future for next generations.





## ➤ Intent

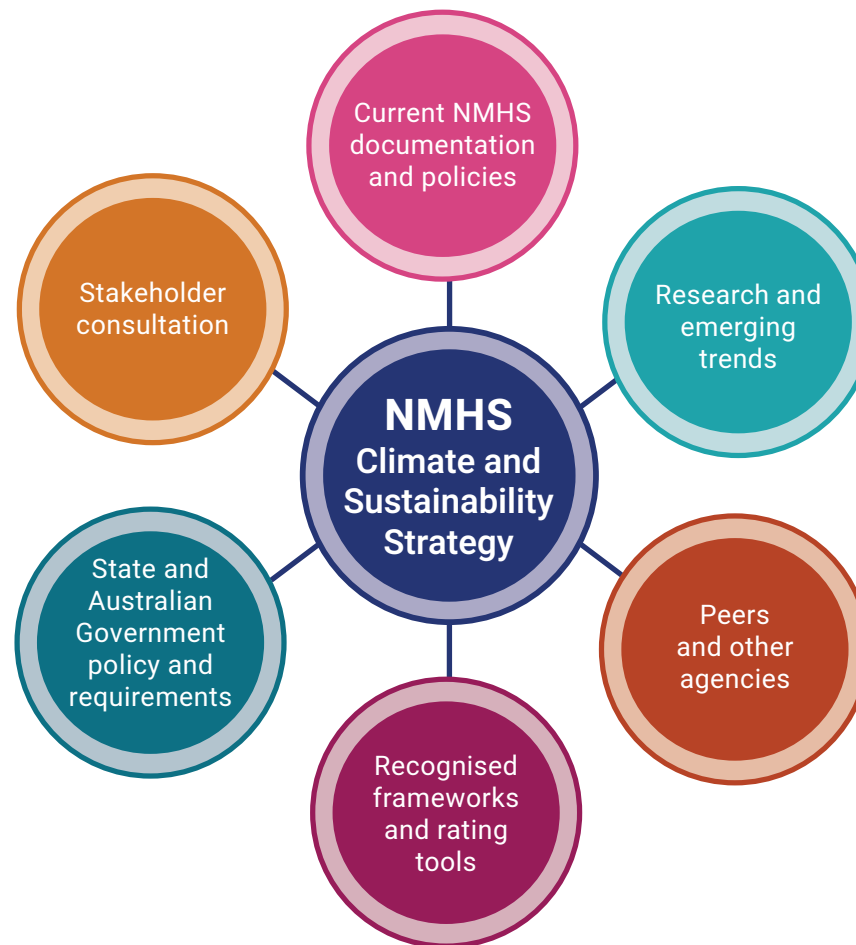
To be a **leading low carbon** and **sustainable** health service that provides high quality healthcare for current and future generations.

## ➤ Climate and sustainability priorities

- Climate adaptation and resilience
- Sustainable low carbon healthcare
- Asset management and utilities
- Procurement, supply chains and purchasing
- Waste management and recycling
- Transport and travel

# > How we developed the Climate and Sustainability Strategy

The strategy's priorities and actions are founded on a thorough review of literature and best practice. Extensive stakeholder consultations took place across NMHS sites and services, as well as with key external partners. Input was gathered from a staff survey and a series of workshops. Further consultations validated the priorities, actions and deliverables.





# > Climate and sustainability priorities

## > Climate adaptation and resilience

### Priority:

We are a climate resilient health service provider that cares for and protects the health and wellbeing of patients and staff from climate change.

### Actions:

- Increase staff, patient and community awareness of the impact climate change has on health.
- Identify, plan and prepare for the impact climate change will have on NMHS:
  - A. Infrastructure
  - B. Service delivery
  - C. Health service demand.

### Definitions

#### Adaptation

Adjusting to the impacts of climate change

#### Resilience

Capacity to cope with climate disturbances

# > Climate and sustainability priorities

## > Sustainable low carbon healthcare

### Priority:

We deliver sustainable, high-quality and low carbon healthcare to patients.

### Actions:

- Support our community's health and wellbeing.
- Focus on value-based healthcare and minimise wasteful activities.
- Prioritise sustainable and low carbon technologies, pharmaceuticals, chemicals and consumables to reduce environmental impact.



# > Climate and sustainability priorities

## > Asset management and utilities

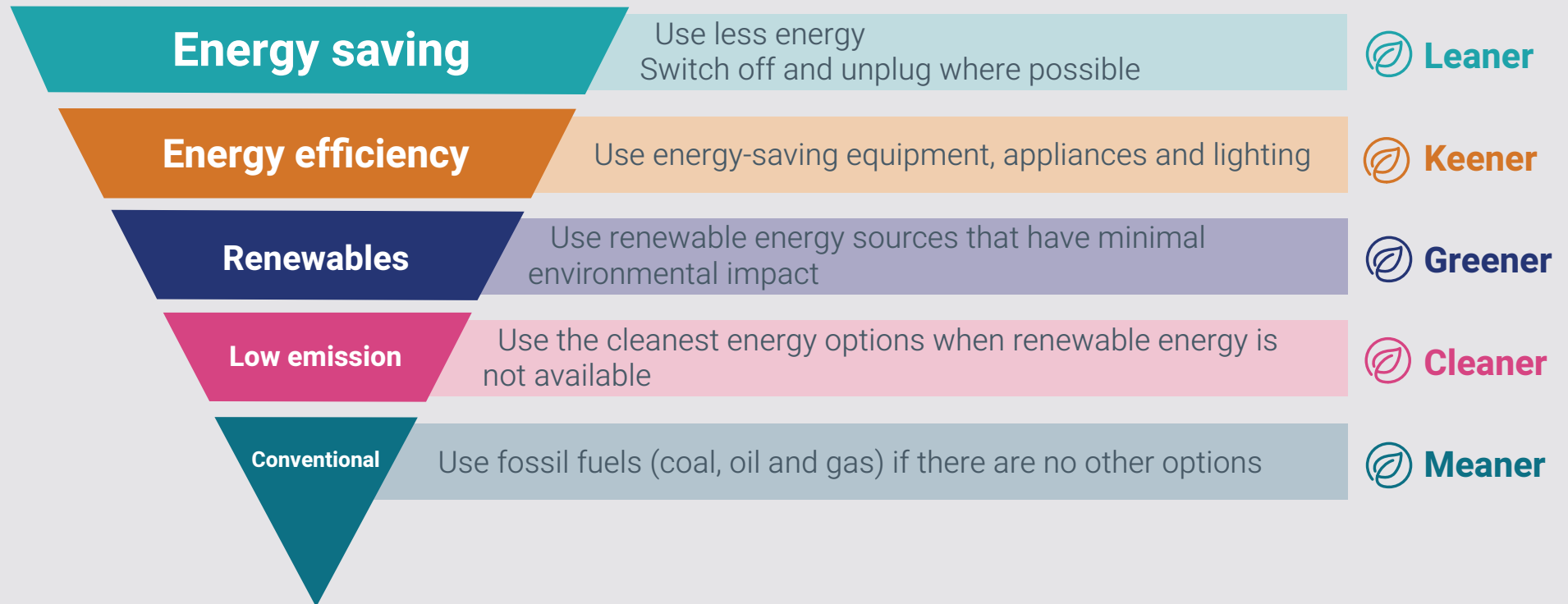
### Priority:

We manage our utilities and infrastructure responsibly to minimise our environmental impact.

### Actions:

- Reduce carbon emissions across our health assets and infrastructure.
- Build and maintain sustainable and climate resilient facilities.
- Optimise our water management and use.

## > The energy hierarchy helps us use energy in the best way



By following the energy hierarchy, we save resources, lower pollution and protect the planet

# > Climate and sustainability priorities

## > Procurement, supply chains and purchasing

### Priority:

We reduce the emissions in our supply chain by prioritising the purchase of sustainable goods and services.

### Actions:

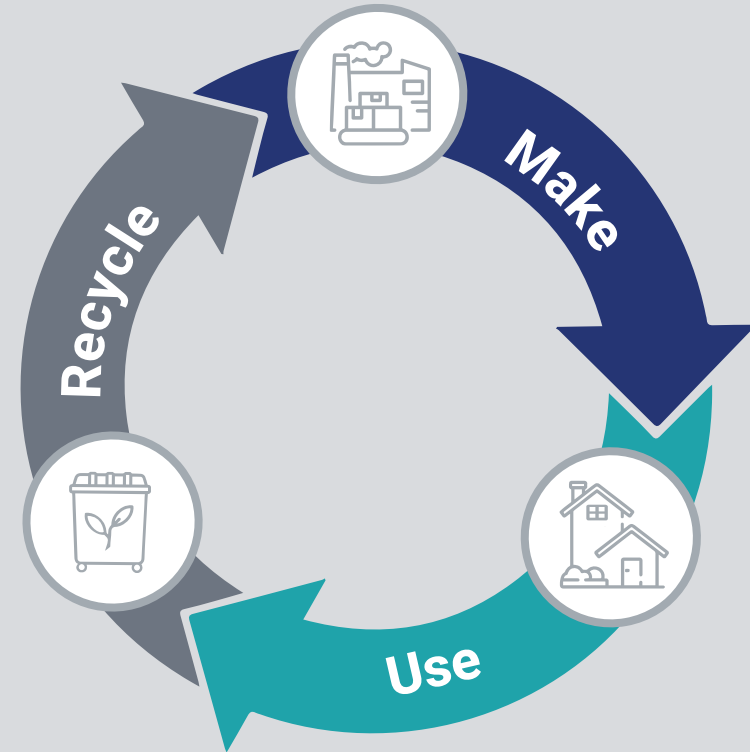
- Strengthen environmental sustainability considerations in purchasing and procurement.
- Engage with suppliers to identify and develop sustainable healthcare products and solutions.
- Consider the life cycle of products and support the circular economy when making purchasing decisions.

## Linear economy



The linear economy creates a lot of waste and uses up resources quickly

## Circular economy



The circular economy aims to reduce waste and environmental impacts by reusing, repairing and recycling resources in a continuous loop

# > Climate and sustainability priorities

## > Waste management and recycling

### Priority:

We optimise the use of resources and manage our waste safely and sustainably.

### Actions:

- Reduce waste generation.
- Increase the recycling and reuse of resources including consumables.
- Adopt best practice waste and resource management.

# The waste hierarchy helps us manage waste sustainably



By following the waste hierarchy, we minimise the amount of waste we create, use resources efficiently, and protect the environment



Reduce



Reuse



Refurbish



Recycle



Replace



Waste segregation

# > Climate and sustainability priorities

## > Transport and travel

### Priority:

We prioritise low carbon transport for staff, patients and visitors to reduce our environmental footprint and contribution to air pollution.

### Actions:

- Reduce emissions from fleet and business travel.
- Encourage active and sustainable travel where possible for staff, patients and visitors.
- Invest in digital health technologies and virtual care solutions to reduce transport-related emissions and improve service access and efficiency.

*"Accelerating the uptake of electric vehicles in Western Australia will provide public health benefits of over \$20 million each year by reducing air pollution."*

State Electric Vehicle Strategy for Western Australia

## > How we will implement the strategy

The direction and focus of this strategy over the next three years is to prepare the organisation for its sustainability transformation. It will be underpinned by annual action plans which will provide further detail on how the strategy will be realised. Appendix A outlines the activities and deliverables that will be prioritised in the first 12 to 18 months of the strategy. The action plan will be revisited regularly to ensure it remains aligned to the strategic intent and can adapt to a rapidly changing environment.

Implementation of this strategy will require collective effort across our organisation and is dependent on several enabling elements.

### Enablers include:

#### Leadership

Clear and strong leadership to drive long-term organisational culture change and embed climate and sustainability as an organisational priority.

#### Governance

Appropriate governance structures to ensure consistency in approach, empower sites and services to deliver sustainable healthcare and measure progress to inform future decisions and hold stakeholders accountable.

#### Climate finance

Appropriate funding to deliver on climate and sustainability priorities, actions and deliverables.

#### Workforce capability and capacity

Build staff knowledge and skills so that they are equipped to respond to the health impacts of climate change and work more sustainably.

#### Research

Invest in and support climate and health research and innovation to improve the evidence base.

# > Climate and Sustainability Strategy 2025 - 2027

**Purpose:** Providing excellent compassionate care.

**Vision:** To be a transformative leader, shaping the future of healthcare.

NMHS strategic objective alignment:  **Building a sustainable future.**

**Intent:** To be a leading low carbon and sustainable health service that provides high quality healthcare for current and future generations.

## Climate adaptation and resilience

**Priority:** We are a climate resilient health service provider that cares for and protects the health and wellbeing of patients and staff from climate change.

**Actions:**

1. Increase staff, patient and community awareness of the impact climate change has on health
2. Identify, plan and prepare for the impact climate change will have on NMHS:
  - A. Infrastructure
  - B. Service delivery
  - C. Health service demand

## Asset management and utilities

**Priority:** We manage our utilities and infrastructure responsibly to minimise our environmental impact.

**Actions:**

1. Reduce carbon emissions across our health assets and infrastructure
2. Build and maintain sustainable and climate resilient facilities
3. Optimise our water management and use evidence-based policies and guidelines to support clinical decision-making in response to new standards

## Waste management and recycling

**Priority:** We optimise the use of resources and manage our waste safely and sustainably.

**Actions:**

1. Reduce waste generation
2. Increase the recycling and reuse of resources including consumables
3. Adopt best practice waste and resource management

## Sustainable low carbon healthcare

**Priority:** We deliver sustainable, high-quality and low carbon healthcare to patients.

**Actions:**

1. Support our community's health and wellbeing
2. Focus on value-based healthcare and minimise wasteful activities
3. Prioritise sustainable and low carbon technologies, pharmaceuticals, chemicals and consumables to reduce environmental impact

## Procurement, supply chains and purchasing

**Priority:** We reduce the emissions in our supply chain by prioritising the purchase of sustainable goods and services.

**Actions:**

1. Strengthen environmental sustainability considerations in purchasing and procurement
2. Engage with suppliers to identify and develop sustainable healthcare products and solutions
3. Consider the life cycle of products and support the circular economy when making purchasing decisions

## Transport and travel

**Priority:** We prioritise low carbon transport for staff, patients and visitors to reduce our environmental footprint and contribution to air pollution.

**Actions:**

1. Reduce emissions from fleet and business travel
2. Encourage active and sustainable travel where possible for staff, patients and visitors
3. Invest in digital health technologies and virtual care solutions to reduce transport-related emissions and improve service access and efficiency



## Acknowledgement

We would like to thank all stakeholders for their participation and contribution to developing the inaugural Climate and Sustainability Strategy 2025-2027 and supporting Action Plan.

We acknowledge the dedication of staff, and the commitment of external stakeholders to collaborating with us to build a more sustainable future.

We appreciate, and are grateful for, all the insights and expertise shared throughout the consultation, and we look forward to working with you to further reduce our environmental footprint and address the health impacts of climate change.

## > Appendix A. 2025-26 Action Plan



### Climate adaptation and resilience

- Expand our climate and health education program to build staff knowledge, skills and capacity
- Review and refresh the sustainability leaders network to increase staff awareness and engagement
- Undertake a climate risk assessment to understand the risks and implications of climate change on NMHS sites and services



### Sustainable low carbon healthcare

- Support local governments to address climate change in their public health planning
- Develop a register of organisational climate and sustainability initiatives to measure impact and identify opportunities for scaling up
- Model and test strategies to reduce waste and exposure to plastic in one maternity ward as a pilot for sustainable and plastic free healthcare practice
- Reduce or remove piped nitrous oxide supply where not clinically necessary
- Reduce waste of nitrous oxide through regular environmental monitoring of nitrous oxide supply
- Prescribe tablet paracetamol pre-operatively over intravenous paracetamol where clinically appropriate



### Asset management and utilities

- Produce a greenhouse gas emissions profile for the organisation
- Develop an Emissions Reduction Plan, including targets and evidence-based initiatives, that sets out a pathway to net zero for NMHS
- Transition away from gas and fossil fuel sources for existing buildings and electrify where possible
- Prioritise low emission products during asset replacement programs (eg: LED lighting replacement)
- Optimise heating, ventilation and air-conditioning (HVAC) systems to reduce energy consumption and provide greater patient comfort
- Include sustainability criteria, minimum energy standards and green design principles in all new builds and retrofits (eg: light coloured roofing and passive heating and cooling design)
- Increase green scaping to provide shade and cooling benefits to buildings
- Updates to water systems and flushing practices to reduce water use
- Explore the viability of water capture and use for grounds and maintenance purposes



## Procurement, supply chains and purchasing

- Identify suitable contracts in the NMHS Strategic Forward Procurement Plan where there may be opportunities to strengthen climate and sustainability considerations for new and replacement contracts
- Partner with suppliers and communicate our requirements for low carbon sustainable alternatives
- Identify alternatives for high volume, high cost and high waste plastic products
- Explore options for product and packaging returns with suppliers
- Increase organisational awareness of circular economy principles and application
- Partner with Health Support Services, Department of Health and South Metropolitan Health Service to develop a prototype Green Procurement dashboard that measures environmental and financial savings over the life cycle related to purchasing decisions



## Waste management and recycling

- Evaluate the Think Before You Glove pilot and expand as appropriate
- Rationalise clinical packs to remove unnecessary items
- Establish a process to facilitate the reuse of surplus materials and equipment
- Progress pilot of (a) returns, and (b) purchasing of remanufactured non-invasive single use medical devices
- Expand use of reusable consumables, including tourniquets, across sites and services
- Conduct regular waste audits across high activity sites to identify opportunities to better manage waste



## Transport and travel

- NMHS fleet vehicles to be replaced with plug-in hybrids and electric vehicles where possible
- Renovate and expand end-of-trip facilities to encourage active transport
- Trial a route optimisation and scheduling app for Hospital in the Home (HITH) and Homelink visits



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This document can be made available in alternative formats on request.

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